

**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments. No new matter has been introduced. Presently, claims 1-6 and 8-17 are pending. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-6 and 8-22 shall be pending.

Claims 1, 4-8, 11-13, 16, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,512,740 to Baniewicz (hereinafter "Baniewicz"). Additionally, claims 2, 3, 9, 10, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Baniewicz in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,130,875 to Doshi (hereinafter "Doshi"). Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections as it is applied to the amended claims.

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 8, and 13 to recite that at least one node transmits data to a central location, the data including respective port numbers of the nodes that have connected thereto at least one spare link via which a message is either sent or received, the identities of the nodes and the spare links interconnecting the nodes. Dependent claims 2, 3, 9, 10, 14, and 15 have been amended for consistency. New independent claim 18 recites collecting, at a central location, a number of parameters associated with a keep-alive message, the collected parameters including an identity of a first node, a number of a transmit port, an identity of a second node, and a number of a receive port associated with the keep-alive message. New claims 19-22 depend from new independent claim 18.

Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing amendments find support at least at page 6, line 9, to page 7, line 5, of the present specification and thus introduce no new matter. Applicants further submit that the claims as amended are distinguishable from the art of record.

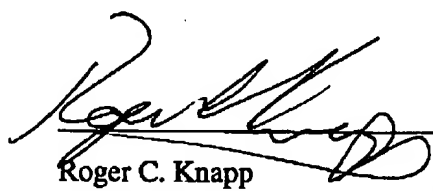
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and request that the Examiner pass the case to issuance. Should the Examiner have any questions, Applicants request that the Examiner contact Applicants' attorney at the address provided below.

Applicants believe fees in the amount of \$104.00 are due in connection with this filing for one additional independent claim and one additional claim in excess of twenty total claims. However, in the event that there are any additional fees due, please charge the same, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-2491.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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